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Iraq: Drying Southern Marshes

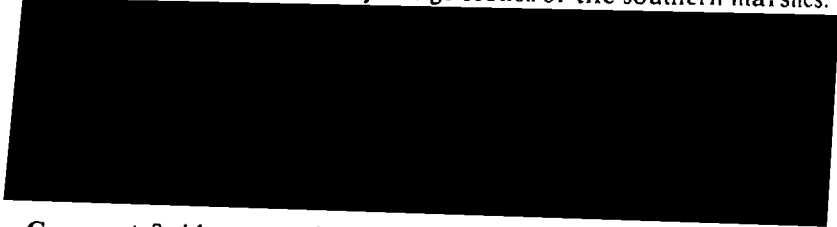
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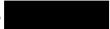

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IRAQ: Drying Southern Marshes

Iraq has nearly completed a major water diversion project that apparently is intended to dry a large section of the southern marshes.



Comment: Saddam may have approved the project after successive government counterinsurgency offensives in the spring and summer failed. If Baghdad views the effort as a success, it may at some point try similar projects in other areas, and these might threaten the insurgency and some Shia Arab communities in the marshes.



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